

Highlights and Sidelights in the History of the Free Church of St. John
1
Emerald and Elkhart Streets, Philadelphia

The church was built by the family of the Rev. George Boyd, rector of St. John's Church, Northern Liberties, and it is a memorial to him. His picture is in the sacristy. There are no records from 1863 to 1870 inclusive, except Baptisms 297, Confirmations 83, Marriages 26, Burials 91. Baptisms in 1861 and 1862 were in homes or a store room on Frankford Avenue, after that in the church.

1871

St. John's was referred to as a mission maintained by the Bishop. Mr. Whitechurch was elected Accounting Warden but promptly resigned. The former Accounting Warden, Mr. Boyd, had to be asked to hand over the books and money to the new Accounting Warden.

Rev. E. Holliday Widener was referred to as the rector, but the next month a committee was appointed to see the Bishop to secure the regular services of a clergyman.

The committee on the resignation of Mr. Whitechurch as Accounting Warden served over a year and every month "reported progress."

A resolution of thanks was sent to the Bishop for providing a clergyman.

A committee of one was appointed to get cords for the ventilators of the church and another committee of one to install them. The following two months the first committee "reported progress."

At one meeting a recess was taken and a member was sent for the Accounting Warden.

A resolution was passed that any member absent for two consecutive meetings without an excuse satisfactory to the Vestry would be declared to have resigned and his place would be filled.

1. In early days Elkhart Street was Cemetery Lane.

A committee was appointed to repair the back fence, also the "outbuilding." This is the first appearance of the fence in the minutes but by no means the last. The need for repairs was constant, and the fence was an eyesore for more than seventy years, till the new steel fence was bought.

At the November meeting there was a dispute between the Reverend Mr. Nock, temporarily in charge, and the Vestry, though in May the Vestry had told the Bishop that Mr. Nock "was the right man in the right place." The Vestry asked the Accounting Warden to have a complete (emphasis) report ready for the next meeting, which he did and then resigned!

Baptisms 11, Burials 3, no Confirmations or marriages.

1872

In March the new Accounting Warden had to be sent for, and he was told that if he could not come he should at least send his report. The Committee reported that the Accounting Warden said he would have his report ready for the Easter Monday parish meeting. The Committee was instructed to tell the Accounting Warden to report to the Vestry within two weeks.

The secretary pro tem of this March meeting added a note, the minutes evidently having been copied into the book by another: "N.B. The above is not a correct copy of my minutes of the Vestry Meeting of March 4, 1872 and I here enter my protest against being saddled with any such blundering verbiage." Signed James Hamilton.

After the annual parish meeting the former Accounting Warden was notified to hand over the books and money and report for the past year, evidently not having done this at the annual meeting.

May 1872 the first mention of a Sunday School building appeared.

June, 1872 there was a special meeting to "take action on an improper expression used in the Vestry meeting June 3 by William Boardman." A letter was read by Mr. Whitechurch in which Mr. Boardman stated he was sorry for what he had said and hoped the Vestry would (or would not? the word "not" is not in the Minutes) expel him. Mr. Whitechurch stated that in answer he had requested Mr. Boardman to make an apology to the Rev. Mr. Nock and the Vestry appointed a committee to see that this was done.

At the August meeting a Vestryman inquired about the Accounting Warden's accounts, no report having been made. (What a time with Accounting Wardens))

The parish contributed only \$600 to the rector's salary this year.

The Rev. Mr. Nock resigned October 21, as he stated, "briefly and feelingly."

A fine resolution of gratitude to him was passed, "especially because of the peculiarly trying circumstances in which he has so frequently been placed." Mr. Boardman was not present!

Baptisms 28, Confirmations 16, Marriages 5, Burials 19.

1873

March, "the system of money-raising styled the envelope system" was adopted by the Vestry.

The Accounting Warden had to be notified of a vote of \$200 to excavate a cellar for the Sunday School building.

At the annual meeting 17 votes were cast. The Sunday School building was erected as a memorial to Mrs. Eleanor Boyd Kester, daughter of Rev. George Boyd. Monthly offerings ranged from \$41 to \$97. Opposition was voted to paving Emerald Street from Clearfield Street to Cemetery Lane.

Baptisms 31, Confirmations 11, Marriages 7, Burials 27.

1874

November, a special meeting to decide whether any or all special meetings since 1872 were legal or illegal, and to receive the resignation of the rector (Rev. John G. Bawn), also to take action concerning a fair held for the benefit of the parish by persons not connected with the parish without the sanction of the Vestry and for which no returns have been made. The Vestry legalized all special meetings except the last. Rev. Mr. Bawn disappeared without resigning. The Bishop nominated a Rev. Mr. Simpson who was unanimously rejected! The Vestry finally paid \$300 as their share of paving Emerald Street.

Baptisms 11, no Confirmations, Marriages 6, Burials 24.

1875

The sexton's salary was \$100 a year. The superintendent of the Sunday School closed the Sunday School building and refused to let anyone in till the Vestry ordered it opened. The Vestry was involved in a fight with Bishop Stevens. He wrote that in 1870 the Vestry asked him to take charge and he placed the church in the care of the City Mission. But since the Vestry never asked to be independent he said he had the right to appoint Rev. Mr. Heaton as minister. The following month Mr. Heaton resigned as locum tenens. The Vestry offered to pay a rector \$350 a year "or the offering."

Baptisms 31, no Confirmations, Marriages 3, Burials 3.

1876

All these years there were only 10 Vestrymen. Rev. Mr. Nichols elected rector but could not accept since he was only a deacon. He resigned his connection in November.

Baptisms 16, Confirmations 20, no Marriages, Burials 6.

1877

Total receipts from Easter 1876 to Easter 1877 were \$1348.

Baptisms 25, no Confirmations, No Marriages, Burials 6.

1878

Total offerings for the year were \$491. The Vestry voted to pay the organ blower \$1 a month. There were 265 in the Sunday School. A Music Committee was appointed and they drew up articles for a choral society, one Vestryman voting no, but the choir rejected the idea. The Music Committee said "the choir voted to postpone consideration which in our experience is tantamount to final repudiation. It is to be regretted that no reasons satisfactory to your Committee were given. The church music is as precarious in supply as ever nor has its quality improved. We refuse to take further steps toward reform." The great gale of October 13 blew all the tin off the church roof.

Baptisms 25, Confirmations 22, Marriages 3, Burials 2.

1879

All through these years the Vestry ignored the Church Canons, interfering with the choir and setting up a division between the Church and Sunday School so that the Sunday School became more important than the church.

The back fence was repaired again. There was a fight with the city. For several years the Sunday School building was rented for a school. The city cancelled the rental in the middle of the year. The Vestry told the city it would be held for the full year's rental. The fence was repaired again. The ordination papers of Rev. Mr. Hoyt had been signed the year previous. At the annual meeting Mr. Hoyt reminded those present of the charter provision that only those were entitled to vote who were recognized by the rector and wardens as attendants or (wrong - should be "and") contributors for one year. Messrs. James

1881

Another Vestryman resigned in April. In June the Sunday School building was placed at the disposal of the rector for one year free of rent for school purposes. (Such nonsense, giving the rector what was already his according to the Canons which go back to the beginnings of English Common Law.) There was no meeting of the Vestry from September to January.

Baptisms 25, Confirmations 10, Marriages 6, Burials 14.

1882

Rev. Mr. Hoyt's salary was raised from \$1000 to \$1200. In July another Vestryman resigned. No more Vestry meetings were recorded until April, 1883.

Baptisms 34, Confirmations 15, Marriages 8, Burials 21.

1883

After the April meeting repeated efforts to hold a meeting resulted in no quorum. There were only three meetings this year and no meeting from November 1883 to April 1884.

Baptisms 27, Confirmations 5, Marriages 10, Burials 25.

1884

The lawn party September of this year made \$45. St. John's Beneficial Society was organized in November. In December Rev. Mr. Hoyt was appointed chaplain of the Episcopal Hospital. He proposed that he be retained as rector and that he would put twenty dollars on the plate every Sunday to pay the church debt. (Note: Mr. Hoyt was very wealthy. When All Saints Church Worcester, Mass. burned in 1932, Mr. Lever being rector of All Saints at that time, Mr. Hoyt, then retired, telegraphed one thousand dollars toward the rebuilding. That was the first gift received after the fire. Mr. Hoyt's wife in her early years had been connected with All Saints.)

Baptisms 33, Confirmations 7, Marriages 8, Burials 27.

1885

Mr. Hoyt resigned in January. Rev. Mr. Harrison was elected rector, salary \$1000. But Mr. Hoyt was present at the February Vestry meeting, reason not known. In March a Vestryman elected at the annual meeting promptly resigned. The sexton was ordered to heat the church properly. In June the rector was "directed (imagine that!) to have a window open behind the choir." Mr. Newbold resigned as Accounting Warden. The October and November receipts were \$140.

Baptisms 44, Confirmations 23, Marriages 5, Burials 13.

1886

Plans were made to enlarge the Sunday School building. The Accounting Warden was just beginning to make monthly reports. February receipts were \$123. The sexton resigned, and the Vestry thanked him for his "faithful performance of his duties"!

Baptisms 53, Confirmations 24, Marriages 7, Burials 29.

1887

The Sunday School building was enlarged.

Baptisms 64, Confirmations 27, Marriages 8, Burials 39.

1888

In June the Vestry went on record favoring an elevated railroad but asked that it be placed on Jasper Street instead of Emerald Street as proposed, Jasper Street being unimproved.

Baptisms 51, Confirmations 20, Marriages 15, Burials 28.

1889

There were no meetings in March and April, no quorum.

The rector's salary was \$1500, organist \$100, sexton \$200.

Baptisms 63, Confirmations 24, Marriages 9, Burials 37.

1890

There was talk of still more additions to the Sunday School building.
Baptisms 64, Confirmations 33, Marriages 12, Burials 45.

1891

Now occurred the first mention of a rectory, "to be built at the earliest possible date." In June there was another Vestry action against the laws of the Church: "Voted that a committee be appointed to have entire charge of the music of the church and to obtain a competent leader of the choir." In November Rev. Mr. Harrison resigned to be chaplain of Episcopal Hospital.

Baptisms 93, Confirmations 32, Marriages 13, Burials 32.

1892

One clergyman was elected rector but declined. Another was elected and he accepted provided he need not live in the parish at first. His offer was rejected. Now we see the first appearance of Mr. Margerum and David Lupton Jr. Henry E.P. Pritchard was elected to the Vestry and later Accounting Warden. Another uncanonical act: Mr. Margerum elected ! Sunday School superintendant. (Of course the Sunday School is directed by the rector.) Rev. Mr. Kelly was elected rector out of a field of three. There was a special meeting in August "to dispose of boys who broke into the church."

Baptisms and Confirmations no record, Marriages 7, Burials 18.

1893

In January the Germantown Convocation, in which St. John's was then located, was invited to meet here. Offerings were now averaging \$30 a Sunday. In March the rector appointed a nominating committee for the Vestry at the annual meeting. The first Easter sunrise service was held. A rectory fund was

begun. Dr. Fischer contributed \$5. An iron fence was erected around the church. The minister of the Hospital Mission wrote to the Vestry inviting the young men of the parish to go on a moonlight excursion. The Vestry answered that if the young men wanted to go they had the sanction of the Vestry. (Very kind of the Vestry.) The secretary was absent several meetings. A vote of thanks was given to the rector for his work for the Sunday School. In October the church had a debt of \$100 which caused much anxiety. The Vestry voted to put all collections for church and Sunday School in one fund to pay bills. They finally allowed the superintendent of the Sunday School to pay bills up to \$15 without consulting the Vestry. The Sunday School committee "sanctioned the usual Christmas treat for the children." The parish Girls' Friendly Society was organized November this year by the daughter of the rector.

Baptisms 55, Confirmations 22, Marriages 7, Burials 27.

1894

At the February meeting the rector, his warden and the secretary were absent. The Sunday School superintendent was authorized "to go ahead and make arrangements for an Easter service." A proposal to form a Junior Bible class was referred to the superintendent and Sunday School committee. Rev. Mr. Kelly received a call from Paris, France which he later accepted. No regret was expressed by the Vestry. Rev. Mr. Knight was elected in May. A new organ was proposed. Mr. Margerum, Sunday School superintendent, even had to be authorized to move the Infants' Class into the Bible class room for the summer. The property committee was instructed to confer with the rector about the building of a rectory. (A Mr. Stedman asked to be allowed to put a sign on the church advertising his business as an undertaker.

Baptisms 53, Confirmations 25, Marriages 5, Burials 22.

1895

The Girls' Friendly Society and the King's Daughters installed windows in the church. In March the Vestry voted "to allow the rector to live wherever he pleased until we have a rectory." Offerings were less than \$30 a Sunday. A new organ was installed. Mr. Brehm and Thomas McIlhenny Jr. were elected to the Vestry. Mr. Margerum was not re-elected. The music committee was authorized to secure a choirmaster. The Vestry thanked Miss Whitechurch for teaching the Bible class. The Accounting Warden reported a decrease of \$4.50 a week due to withdrawals. Mr. Knight resigned. No regret was expressed. He asked that his resignation take effect December 1st; the Vestry asked that it take effect October 1st. A dispute arose about \$106 raised for a new carpet in the Infant class room. Mr. Opdyke had the money and wanted the Accounting Warden to sign a receipt that the money would be used only for a carpet.

Baptisms 28, Confirmations 37, Marriages 5, Burials 10.

1896

In January Rev. Mr. Wright was elected rector. In February the Vestry voted to use fifty per cent of the Easter offering of the main school to buy benches for the Sunday School rooms.

The decision of Bishop Whitaker as to the \$110 held by the former rector, Mr. Knight, which was offered to the Vestry by Mr. Opdyke on condition it be used for a carpet: the Bishop told the Vestry they were trustees and money raised for a purpose could be used for that purpose only. Offerings now were about \$25 a Sunday. At the annual meeting 96 votes were cast. Mr. Opdyck got one vote! The Easter offering was \$83. The Sunday School librarian was told by the Sunday School committee that he could not buy any more books. The rector

was asked to appeal for teachers. (Comment: two wrongs here: it was the rector's business to secure teachers and a public appeal for teachers almost always results in just the persons who should not be teachers.) The Vestry again asked Miss Whitechurch to continue. In December the treasurer of the Sunday School was instructed to pay to the Accounting Warden enough money to meet the deficit in the church funds. The Christmas offering was \$14.

Baptisms 43, no Confirmations, Marriages 4, Burials 7.

1897

In January the Sunday School treasury had a balance of \$1.58. Salaries were ordered paid but there was only \$35 for the rector so he had to wait. In March he had to wait again. Offerings were now less than \$20 a Sunday. Easter offering was \$106, Sunday School \$194. The Sunday School was more important than the church. Only 9 were elected to the Vestry. Mr. Steelman was retained by the Vestry as Sunday School superintendent. The organ boy's salary was raised to \$2 a month. Mr. Margerum was elected to the Vestry to fill the vacancy. A committee was appointed to consider a new parish building. The Christmas offering was \$24.

Baptisms 45, Confirmations 24, Marriages 2, Burials 21.

1898

At last, in February of this year, the Vestry voted that the consent of the rector must be secured for the use of the Sunday School building. Mr. Lupton moved that the rector notify the congregation that the Vestry desired \$4000 by Thanksgiving for a new parish house. The rector was given four weeks vacation provided he pay for his own supply. At the September meeting a motion to

"put vestments on the choir" was lost. Mr. Lupton asked and received permission to use the Sunday School building as a gymnasium in the winter. A motion was passed to write to the Police Lieutenant about the "nuisance of boys and if he does not attend to the matter write to headquarters." Offerings were about \$25 a Sunday. The warden was asked to make an urgent appeal to the church for funds. The sexton was voted \$2 for every paid entertainment. The Christmas offering was \$47.

Baptisms 42, Confirmations 15, Marriages 5, Burials 14.

1899

The above action as to the sexton was rescinded and he is to be paid only when the Vestry thinks it is necessary. The Easter offering was \$117, Sunday School Easter offering was \$203. At the annual meeting Mr. Pritchard, though he was elected, "took exception to the vote and declared the election illegal but being unable to sustain his exceptions the election stood as declared by the judge of election"! (Exactly this was to happen again 40 years later, 1939). The fence had to be repaired again. The rector resigned in June. Mr. Pritchard under protest made the motion to accept the resignation. (Question: had the resignation anything to do with the annual meeting?) No regret was expressed. Rev. Mr. Warner was elected rector. Offerings were about \$25 a Sunday. The Christmas offering was \$44.

Baptisms 52, Confirmations 16, Marriages 5, Burials 13.

1900

At the annual meeting Mr. Warner gave notice that the "Charter provision that only the users of envelopes would be recognized as legal voters would be lived up to to the letter." (Mr. Warner was positively and negatively wrong, positively because the Charter says nothing about envelopes but says voters must

be regular contributors, and negatively wrong because he failed to say the Charter says voters must be usual attendants.) At the June meeting the music committee was very much discouraged about the choir. The Easter offering was \$110, Sunday School Easter offering \$255. Weekly offerings were less than \$30. The Christmas offering was \$27. There were four ⁹chir leaders and organists in two years. Miss Whitechurch resigned. "The walk to the out-house was repaired."

Baptisms 36, Confirmations 21, Marriages 12, Burials 23.

1901

The Easter offering was \$110, Sunday School Easter offering was \$269. The rector's warden resigned. Steps were taken to secure a site for the new building. It was planned either to sell or move the present church. Only 9 Vestrymen were elected on the first ballot. On the second Mr. Kraft was elected but resigned in September. The Christmas offering was \$40.

Baptisms 36, Confirmations 23, Marriages 4, Burials 29.

1902

In January the secretary was instructed to write to Mr. Lupton about the conduct of the boys in the gymnasium. Mr. Pritchard died. The Vestry ordered that slips be pasted on the Lenten boxes stating that "a portion of the receipts would go for Missions." Mr. George Scott now appeared as teller. Mr. ELL. Forstner was elected to the Vestry. One Vestryman promptly resigned. The Easter offering was \$200. The organist, Mr. Reigel, resigned. Mr. Lupton resigned as Accounting Warden. Mr. Waldman was the new organist. Rev. Mr. Warner resigned in June. No regret was expressed. A motion was passed to return to the donors the money given for a vested choir. In October Rev. Mr. Garland of Bristol (future Bishop of Pennsylvania) was elected rector but declined.

1905

The only item of interest in this year was the election of Mr. Matthew McIlhenny as Vestryman.

Baptisms 67, Confirmations 25, Marriages 20, Burials 36.

1906

The Easter offering was \$109; Sunday School Easter offering was \$303. The Vestry was trying to borrow \$5000 from Mr. George C. Thomas. The Sunday School needed teachers. The Vestry protested against the proposed location of the new St. George's Church. The rector and a committee were asked to visit St. Nathanael's, St. George's and Messiah with a view to consolidation. A request by the rector's warden that the members of the gymnasium be privileged to use the main Sunday School room of the parish house for basketball met with vigorous objection. Rev. Mr. Arkin of St. George's looked on consolidation with disfavor; Rev. Mr. Miller of St. Nathanael's looked on it with great favor. A block party made \$55. Offerings were now more than \$30. The first real effort was made for a Christmas offering but only \$61 was received.

Baptisms 61, Confirmations 26, Marriages 11, Burials 39.

1907

A motion was passed in February that the By-laws be amended so that voters must be 18, communicants and users of envelopes. (But the Charter, not the By-laws, would have to be amended and this would require action by the State Legislature). The Easter offering was \$89, Sunday School Easter offering \$284. Weekly offerings were about \$35. In July a letter was sent to "delinquent Vestrymen asking them to be present at meetings." That summer the Sunday School met in the morning, but the play was reported to be a "complete failure."

The Vestry "desired a spiritual revival among the Sunday school scholars." Through this year the rector's warden, Mr. Lupton, always presided at Vestry meetings. (Contrary to the By-laws) In October basketball practice was allowed but not a game. Rev. Mr. Bagley resigned, the first rector's resignation to be accepted with regret. Rev. Mr. Hill was considered as successor but not elected. Mr. Bagley was evidently the most popular so far. The Christmas offering was \$40.

Baptisms 51, Confirmations 26, Marriages 21, Burials 38.

1908

Mrs. Horsfield took charge of the Infant Department. Offerings were about \$35 weekly. Rev. Mr. Woodroffe was elected rector. The Easter offering was \$91, Sunday School Easter offering \$329. At the October meeting a resolution was passed that "a surplised choir would be for the best interests of the parish but it was left to the congregation to decide." The seating capacity of the church was enlarged at a cost of \$5000. It was voted to leave the administration of the parish house to the rector. (No such vote was necessary as that is one of the fundamental duties of the rector according to Canon Law). The parish house had been built five years but the architects had not been paid. A Mr. Milligan asked for the use of the organ and Mr. Lupton moved to grant it, but it was voted down.

Baptisms 92, Confirmations 71, Marriages 8, Burials 22.

1909

In January the Vestry voted to have the parish house closed during the day (forgetting the vote of the previous year about the rector's duty to control the parish house?). Offerings were about \$35. At the April meeting Mr. Lupton moved a vote of thanks to the rector "for efficient service." Easter offering was \$92; Sunday School Easter offering was \$346. Mr. Woodroffe announced that he would change the rector's warden every year. Messrs. Forstner and Lupton were not renominated for the Vestry. Mr. Woodroffe asked for an assistant and a deaconess. There was a special meeting in July to consider the misbehavior of the boys of the Harrison Association. Offerings at the end of the year were up to \$40. The boys of the Harrison Association were notified they could not use the basement because they had not fulfilled their pledge.

Baptisms 113, Confirmations 43, Marriages 11, Burials 43.

1910

In January Mr. McIlhenny moved that bays be kept out of the parish house and that the sexton be required to do better work to retain his position. Mr. Harry Kraft was elected to the Vestry. It was voted to complete the hall in 1911. The Christmas offering jumped to \$293!

Baptisms 103, Confirmations 47, Marriages 13, Burials 40.

1911

Offerings were about \$45. The rear lot was purchased. Rev. Mr. Woodroffe resigned but a strong resolution was adopted to prevail on him to remain. However, his resignation was finally accepted. Rev. Mr. Jansen was elected in July. The question of dancing in the parish house was laid on the table.

Baptisms 66, Confirmations 26, Marriages 3, Burials 33.

1915-1927

The minutes for these thirteen years have disappeared. Therefore, there is no record of the rectorship of Rev. Gomer B. Matthews.

Record for these thirteen years: Baptisms 735, Confirmations 726, Marriages 1925-27 40, Burials 469.

1928

Rev. Mr. Goostray had become rector in 1920. There is no record of his rectorship to 1928. We do know that he organized the Endowment Fund and that the church enjoyed its most flourishing years while he was rector. Offerings increased to \$1000 a month. Yet the interior of the parish house was not finished and to do this Mr. Goostray's successor Rev. Mr. Sasse and his Vestry placed a \$10,000 mortgage on the property which in spite of depressions, wars and internal parochial dissension in the years 1930 to 1940 has now been nearly paid. In this year, 1928, the Vestry ordered (thus) the picnic to be held in Wissinoming Park. Mr. Goostray resigned and his resignation was accepted with sincere regret. A committee to nominate for the vacancy consisting of Messrs. Nevins, Harris, Scott, Conn, Forstner and Shuttleworth.

Baptisms 54, Confirmations 34, Marriages 16, Burials 45.

1929

Clergy suggested for the rectorship were Rev. Messrs. Hall of St. Paul's Aramingo, Powell, Thomas Parker, Rudderow, and Saunders. The parish was slipping financially, borrowing (where is not known) \$5000. Rev. Mr. Findlay of Albany N.Y. was elected rector but declined. The back fence is with us again, reported to be in danger of collapse. Rev. Mr. Sasse was elected rector unanimously,

Messrs. Conn, Harris, Forstner, Nevins, and Bortel having heard him preach in Holy Apostles' Church. Now the \$10,000 was borrowed on mortgage for three purposes: to finish the parish house, repay a bank loan and repay the rectory fund. The mortgage was placed on the whole property and in doing so the Vestry broke two Church laws: 1, they did not ask the ^{consent}~~consent~~ of the Standing Committee of the Diocese and 2, they mortgaged the church, a consecrated building. The Vestry refused to allow the Rev. Mr. Biagini the use of the parish house basement, another usurpation of the rector's powers.

Baptisms 27, Confirmations 35, Marriages 10, Burials 26.

1930

The Vestry (again!) allowed the Schute to use the hall, but not Mr. Corduff's boys for basketball or volley ball. The sexton was ordered to follow a schedule and if he did not, to resign. (The By-laws provide for the election of a sexton by the Vestry but the direction of his work is left to the rector and wardens.) Messrs. Bortel and Harris interviewed the sexton, with what result we know not. Mr. Conn, as chairman of the music committee, notified Wesley Lane that he could not sing in the choir Easter Sunday because he had not had sufficient rehearsal, an action endorsed by the Vestry. (See the Canon of the Church printed in the front of every hymnal.) This Vestry also employed the organist. (They were in the wrong Church - they should have been in a Baptist Church.)

Baptisms 32, Confirmations 24, Marriages 13, Burials 16.

1931

At this time the Vestry were engaged in a battle with the Scouts. The music committee asked the organist to resign. The church was running behind every month financially. Mr. Sasse agreed to accept whatever was left after current bills had been paid. This year there were 329 pledges, of which 96 were paid in full, 102 only 75%, 33 only 50%, 76 less than 50%, 22 nothing. For the year 1931 the Woman's Auxiliary, as the women's society was then called, made \$339 - bazaar supper \$85, card parties and socials \$191.

Baptisms 38, Confirmations 32, Marriages 3, Burials 20.

1932

The Girls' Friendly Society had 22 members. Notices were placed in the pews asking silence. Transportation to the picnic could not be provided. There was contention in the choir, the choir refusing to sing music ordered by the organist. The rector's salary for 1933 ordered to be \$600 but the organist's salary remained \$500 and the sexton's \$1200. This again was a violation of law. The intent of the Vestry was to force Mr. Sasse's resignation and the courts have repeatedly held that election to a rectorship constitutes a binding contract between the rector and Vestry which can be broken only by direction of the Bishop and what a Vestry cannot do directly (force the rector's resignation) they can not do indirectly by reducing his salary. Of course, if there is no money coming in, no salaries can be paid, but that is another matter.

Baptisms 33, no confirmations, Marriages 5, Burials 29.

1933

There was a dispute over Mr. Sasse's resignation. At the January meeting the Vestry approved Mr. Conn's borrowing \$500 from the Rectory Fund. After Mr. Sasse resigned, Mr. Harris was voted \$5 a week to visit the sick. Another \$150 was borrowed from the Rectory Fund. Rev. Mr. Roak was elected rector at a salary of \$2100, Mr. Schät dissenting, but declined. The Vestry refused to pay Miss Bender's bill for \$5 for creche figures purchased by Mr. Sasse. Rev. Mr. Lever was asked to be acting rector from June through September. He was elected rector in September.

Baptisms 16, Confirmations 24, Marriages 2, Burials 12.

1934

The Accounting Warden was authorized to draw on the Rectory Fund for current expenses. For the first quarter the average contribution for each person attending services was six cents. (In 1930 and later it was one dollar.) There was more friction in the choir between members and choir director. The church was in critical financial condition and would probably have to ask the Diocese for aid.

Baptisms 13, Confirmations 25, Marriages 4, Burials 19.

1935

There was constant borrowing from the Rectory Fund. The choir-master paid for his own vacation. The Sunday School picnic in Wissinoming Park cost \$49, the same as now to Riverview Beach. Of course, there is no comparison as to value received.

Baptisms 18, Confirmations 39, Marriages 5, Burials 18.

1936

Appeal for help was made to the Diocesan Commission on Clerical Salaries. Note that this was two years before the division of the church into two factions and the ensuing fight. This fact should be remembered because it was later falsely alleged that the financial troubles of the church were due to dissension, whereas the truth is the cause was steadily decreasing membership, the long history of dissension in the church and the depression.

Baptisms 23, Confirmations 38, Marriages 2, Burials 16.

1937

The fence again! It was reported to be in bad condition. The rector suggested that each Vestrymen raise \$500 or contribute \$100. (No result.)

Baptisms 17, Confirmations 9, Marriages 8, Burials 15.

1938

Both church and parish house were reported to be "dirtier than ever and it was suggested that the sexton be given seeds to plant on the floor of the parish house." As the end of the year and the January annual meeting drew near, a group organized to elect new Vestrymen who lived in the neighborhood and would be more representative of the members. The rector asked for a large parish meeting and he got it, the largest up to that time.

At this meeting a motion was made and passed requesting the rector hereafter, before every annual meeting, to ^{appoint a nominating committee} nominate a complete slate of Vestrymen. The rector did not suggest this motion, but its wisdom is apparent. It precludes foolish nominations from the floor and secures the best men in a quiet and orderly fashion, while still preserving the right of the members to nominate from the floor. New Vestrymen elected were Russell Corduff, John Fowler, George Rose, Joseph Martin and Howard Overholt.

1938 → Baptisms 15, Confirmations 37, Marriages 2, Burials 19.

1939

At the first meeting of the Vestry, Mr. Conn, though he had been re-elected, protested the annual meeting as illegal because it was held in January instead of on Easter Monday and twelve Vestrymen were elected instead of ten, both actions being contrary to the Charter. But both actions had been done every year since 1913. The rector was advised by Diocesan authorities to secure legal counsel and accordingly obtained the Hon. Clinto^x Rogers Woodruff, former Philadelphia Commissioner of Public Welfare, warden of St. Clement's Church and in the very front rank of Philadelphia attorneys. Mr. Woodruff instructed the rector that there could be no Vestry till the Easter Monday election when ten would be elected, in accordance with the Charter, so from January to April the rector acted alone. He appointed Mr. George W. Rose financial officer who accounted for all receipts and paid bills. The rector purposely had nothing to do with receipts or expenditures. The annual meeting Easter Monday elected a Vestry harmonious and willing to cooperate with the rector, new Vestrymen being Messrs. Martin, Rose, Hodges, Overholt, and Courduff, the process of healing being completed the following year. Since then there has been complete peace. Any individual differences have been quickly adjusted or individuals finding themselves unable to be happy with us instead of causing trouble have gone elsewhere which is as it should be. Our congregations, while not increasing, have held their own in spite of frequent removals and receipts have steadily increased. But from 1939 to 1950 it was necessary to ask aid from the Commission on Clerical Salaries, the reason being the necessity of making regular payments on the ten thousand dollar mortgage incurred by the Vestry of 1929. This mortgage is now nearly paid. At the May meeting, on Mr. Courduff's advice, the Vestry validated all acts of previous Vestries. The Vestry in June

of this year (1939) wrote to the chairman of the Commission, Rev. James M. Niblo, "in spite of any report that may have reached you, we assure you that the prevailing bad economic condition of Kensington is ample explanation of our need. Attendance compares favorably with the last eight years. We asked and received \$300 in 1936 when the depression was not as bad as today."

Baptisms 19, Confirmations 9, Marriages 8, Burials 13.

1940

The rector himself reduced his salary \$100. The new Vestry consisted of Messrs. Baringer, Martin, Buehler, Hodges, Helms, Steele, Beck, Proctor, Godin, and Roberts. A letter received from Miss Sarah Smith authorized the use in any desired way of the one thousand dollars she gave. This gift was in her will but she made the gift at this time. A Teen-Age Canteen was started and was very successful for 12 years.

Baptisms 17, Confirmations 18, Marriages 7, Burials 9.

1941

The outstanding event this year was the bequest of \$2700 from the Brewster estate. Church School membership all through these years was much smaller than in former years. This is explained by removals and smaller families caused by the depression. Public schools had much smaller enrollments. Offerings were increasing. With the Brewster bequest the church was completely renovated.

Baptisms 15, Confirmations 14, Marriages 8, Burials 4.

1942

This year the church was left \$1000 in the will of Ella Ferguson.

Baptisms 15, Confirmations 14, Marriages 8, Burials 4.

1943

Our new Bishop, the Right Reverend Oliver J. Hart, urged rectors to revise their communicant lists. Accordingly the number for St. John's was reduced from about 900, an entirely fictitious number, to the real figure of about 200. Since then we have grown to just under 300. We reported to the Diocese that we ^{were} seriously under-insured. The church, valued at \$80,000 was insured for only \$18,000; the parish house, now valued at \$225,000 was insured for only \$64,000. Both buildings are now insured for \$225,000, representing 80% of value.

Baptisms 9, Confirmations 10, Marriages 3, Burials 13.

1944

Offerings were now averaging \$125 a week. Envelopes for contributions to the mortgage fund were now being used ~~and were now being used~~ and were and are proving very successful, nearly every month more than the monthly payment. The Endowment Fund was now \$5409.84. St. John's Guild through these years, while small in membership, was very active in raising money for the church. But compare the Guild Christmas and Easter offering this year \$100 each, with the same offerings in 1951, 1952, and 1953 of \$500 each, a total of \$1000. The Girls' Friendly Society, one of the oldest in the Diocese, had this year a membership of 40. This was their 30th anniversary year. Our branch was started in 1893 by the daughter of the then rector, Rev. Mr. Kelly. Mention should be made of the parish paper, renamed The Freedom by the rector, which through these years has been very useful in keeping the parish informed. Many repairs and improvements were made to both buildings which had been sadly neglected. Total Easter offering was \$640. (1950-1953 it averaged over \$1000, as did the Christmas

offering.) The lawn party made \$4.00. On All Saints' Sunday the 80th anniversary dinner was served to one hundred and fifty-two. Speakers were Bishop Hart, Rev. Dr. Shryock, Mr. Brown principal of Jones Junior High School, Mr. Gilmore principal of Stetson Junior High School, Mr. Rose, rector's warden and Mr. Helms, accounting warden. The program is attached to this history. A turkey dinner was served by Kirk B. O'Ferrall for \$1.20 a plate and three pieces of music were paid \$21. Tickets were sold for \$1.50 and all expenses were met. Very beautiful floral decorations were given by Mr. Gachring and Mr. Helms. In December a bazaar and supper made \$180.

Baptisms 12, Confirmations 13, Marriages 2, Burials 12.

1945

During the war the names of our boys in service were read with a prayer at the morning service. In January total receipts were more than \$1200. The Shrove Tuesday party was held all through these years to the present time and has always been very popular. There are twelve tables, one for each month, appropriately decorated, and twelve brief entertainments. Attendance has ranged from 160 to 225. In March the Vestry passed a resolution urging upon the state more provisions for victims of rheumatic heart disease. From 1939 Miss Florence Haines has been choir director and organist and her loyalty and devotion have been constant. Insurance on both buildings was increased but not yet adequate. A special service of Thanksgiving was celebrated on VE day May 8. A letter was received from Rev. James M. Niblo, chairman of the Diocesan Commission on Clerical Salaries, saying that St. John's was receiving more aid from the Diocese than any other parish. The reply made three points: our people are wage earners

and their real pay after taxes and deductions for Red Cross and Community Chest ~~are~~^{is} lower than before the war; we have the largest parish house in the diocese and both buildings are in urgent need of repairs; and, if the parish house had burned and we had not increased our insurance, we would have received only \$14000. Much trouble with sextons was experienced in these war years.

Baptisms 11, Confirmations 9, Marriages 3, Burials 11.

1946

The Diocesan aid was reduced to \$720. A new boiler was ordered at a cost of \$2100. Plans were made for extra offerings to meet this expense. Windows were repaired in church and parish house at a cost of about \$700. Twenty-four new card tables were secured. The rector and Vestry strongly supported converting the old Franklin Cemetery to a city playground. In November the chapel in the parish house was consecrated as a memorial to our boys in the World War. The altar was built by William Steele. The flag was given by Mrs. Pritchard and was used at the burial of her son, Corporal Henry E.P. Pritchard. The cross is in memory of Mrs. Jennie Rutherford, mother of Mrs. Most. One of the candlesticks is in memory of Albert Barandon and the other is in memory of Joseph Hartley, killed in action, as are the Prayer Book and Bible.

Total receipts in November were \$1060. Total receipts for the year were \$9556. Five different sextons were employed this year.

Baptisms 17, Confirmations 18, Marriages 4, Burials 9.

1947

The Diocesan Commission on Clerical Salaries granted St. John's \$320 for the year and \$200 for the rector's salary and asked the Vestry to give \$100 more to the rector, which was done. Through these years small repairs

(except to plumbing, heating, and windows which were very expensive and therefore not made) were continually being made. Total receipts for the year were \$8326. There were four different sextons during the year.

Baptisms 10, Confirmations 5, Marriages 4, Burials 7.

1948

This year was noteworthy for the installation of a beautiful carpet in center and cross-aisles. Gifts of money were given as memorials which are inscribed in a framed parchment. The side aisles were provided with rubber matting. The total cost was \$482. Total receipts were \$8340. By this time there were thirty-two candles installed in the church, a revolution indeed but one which caused no commotion probably because the rector stressed the point that there was nothing particularly sacred about candles but that they do beautify the services. The pair of three-branched candelabra was given by the rector and Mrs. Lever and Katherine Lever in memory of John Medbury Lever. The pair of Eucharistic candlesticks was given by Rev. Leonard Hursh in memory of his parents. The seven-branched candelabra were given by Mrs. Baringer in memory of her husband Elmer S. Baringer, sometime accounting warden. The candle-holders in the windows are not a memorial. (In 1932 a pair of processional candlesticks was given by Mrs. Buchler in memory of her mother Alida G. Bellis.) When the present rector came to the parish there was not even a processional cross. This was given by Mrs. Wesley Deno in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tait. Incidentally these and all other memorials are entered in the Altar Book of Memorials. Receipts for this year were \$8340.

Baptisms 5, Confirmations 15, Marriages 4, Burials 14.

1949

A move by the Board of Managers of the Episcopal Hospital to join the University of Pennsylvania Hospital was now causing great concern. Anticipating events it may be said here that this plan (or better, "scheme") was blocked and though the hospital has been largely lost to the Episcopal Church yet its name and location remain the same. In September the outdoor bulletin board given by William Barandon in memory of his sister Lily Barandon for many years head of the Altar Guild and Primary Department was dedicated. It is one of the most beautiful in the city.

Baptisms 9, Confirmations 12, Marriages 3, Burials 15.

1950

Above everything else an oil burner was installed at a cost of \$990 (a cement block boiler^{room} was extra). This has been a veritable life saver, enabling us to do away with a sexton-fireman and saving his wages. The cost was spread over three years and in March 1953 was paid in full. In November Herbert Humphries and his sister Mrs. Kridalsch¹⁶ presented to the church a set of carillonic bells in memory of their parents. Since then hymns have been played on the chimes every Sunday.

Baptisms 8, Confirmations 4, Marriages 5, Burials 8.

1951

The Diocese notified the Vestry that no further aid would be given. This was serious because that aid helped to pay the mortgage which was placed in 1929. Perhaps the action of the Diocese was a blessing in disguise in that the church now became fully independent. In December the Vestry went on record strongly opposing the Pechan bill which in effect would cause a witch-hunt among

public school teachers. Floodlights were installed to light the outside of the church which bring out the dignity and beauty of our church.

Baptisms 8, Confirmations 26, Marriages 6, Burials 12.

1952

In January the choir had fallen to its lowest number in our history but as the result of a strong statement by the rector the choir took on new life and reached its present (1953) level. The Guild was now operating a merchandise club which enabled the Guild to make an offering of \$500 every Easter and \$500 every Christmas. New glass was put into the church lights, a great improvement. The event which rivals in importance was the complete renovation of the church interior. The necessary money was given by our members and the work done by our own men, all of whose names are inscribed in the Altar Book of Memorials. The names should be inscribed in letters of light. The cost was something under \$1000 and if done by outside labor (though no union painter would use such powerful paint-removing acid) the cost would certainly have been \$4000.

Baptisms 10, Confirmations 7, Marriages 3, Burials 9.

So we have brought the history of the Free Church of St. John from 1863 to 1953. Next year, 1954, will be the 90th anniversary of the incorporation of the Church into the Diocese. The ninety years have been marked at intervals with very disagreeable quarrels but these stand out more prominently than they should. What has counted most in the sight of God and for the continuing life of the church has been ~~the wealth~~ the flood of self-sacrifice on the part of hundreds who were content to pray, work and give without thought of praise or reward. Through good times and bad, St. John's people have cared for the church and parish house as one generation has succeeded another. St. John's

is much weaker numerically than it has been for perhaps sixty years but there is here a group of men and women second to none in America for their self-sacrifice and devotion.

Above all else St. John's has an essential work to do in Kensington and that is to be a "bridge" church between Protestants and Roman Catholics. We are Protestant in our devotion to the freedom of the individual to think for himself, and we are Catholic in our Creeds, Sacraments and the Apostolic Order of the Ministry, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. All this is our priceless heritage and if the people of St. John's remain true to that heritage St. John's cannot fail.

Something should be said about the Accounting Wardens of the past twenty years. Mr. Conn bore the burden of increasing debt for several years. He was succeeded by Mr. Elmer Baringer who brought to the difficult work the ability of a skilled accountant. Upon his death Mr. J. Franklin Helms took up the load. The parish owes much to Mr. Helms. His influence for good in the parish has been immeasurable. It was at his suggestion that the vestry elected the present devoted and efficient Accounting Warden, Fred. R. Mills. Mr. William P. Mantai before his untimely death acted as Mr. Helms' assistant treasurer, and we remember with deep appreciation his clear financial reports.

1953

The outstanding event of this year was the annual lawn party, held four nights in June as in past years. What made this lawn party notable was the amount of money raised, more than \$800, the largest amount for such an event in the history of the parish. Also mention should be made of the Sunday evening service and Bible class carried on through January and February. The rector covered the Old Testament - dates, history, and contents of the books. While the attendance was not large those who came were enthusiastic.

1953

The Evening Prayer services and the rector's talks on the Old Testament continued to Lent and while the attendance was never large the services were very satisfying.

Easter eggs were sold in sufficient quantity to pay our Diocesan Assessment. This makes another year that both Assessment and Affortment were paid, a wonderful record for such a small parish, with the cost of our large parish house.

The Glencoe Tuesday party was as successful as it always is. We never make any money but the parish joins in the evening as one family and everyone has a grand time.

Wednesday evenings in Lent the rector talked about a different and great religious picture each week and a copy was given to each one attending as well as to children in the Church School the following Sunday.

The Easter offering was nearly \$200!

Mrs. Walter F. Vinspratt gave a superb set of white altar hangings in memory of her husband. They are as beautiful as any in the city.

The Carnival party produced ^{more than \$800} ~~about \$1200~~ in profits, an amazing figure again for such a small parish.

Our indefatigable men again distinguished themselves by replacing beams and joists under the side aisles of the church and putting in new and beautiful floor coverings.

Our branch of the Girls' Friendly Society, 60 years old this year, started by Miss Kelly, daughter of the then rector, observed their anniversary with a wonderful dinner attended by 92.

The merchandise club continued to be one of our financial anchors, contributing \$1000 every year to the church.

The Confirmation class while not very large - 14 - was notable for its majority of adults and a whole family, father, mother, daughter, son.

The Corporate Communion and breakfast for men and boys in November was very successful, 48 attending.

Christmas Eve attendance was better than for four of the last five years. The offering was nearly \$1000!

1954

The Home Tuesday ^{Party} was almost the best ever.

The Easter offering was the largest in the history of the church
over \$1200

We realized \$138 from the sale of Easter eggs for the diocesan
assessment, the largest ever from Easter eggs.

The altar more looked so lovely at Easter, \$115 contributed for flowers,
again the largest gift for this purpose.

The Reverend John H. Lever resigned as rector May 1st.

His resignation was received with great regret.

The annual parish meeting Easter Sunday turned into a
farewell party for Mr. and Mrs. Lever.

Mrs. Lever was given a beautiful fitted bag by the Altar Guild.

To both were given an electric automatic toaster ^{by the church} and a purse of \$500 from the parish

Endowments were established for both and their names were inscribed in the
Book of Memorials.